

NJPAC

feb/mar 2016



Violin virtuoso Joshua Bell leads the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in symphonies by Beethoven and Prokofiev, and performs Violin Concertos by Tchaikovsky and Bach, March 19

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

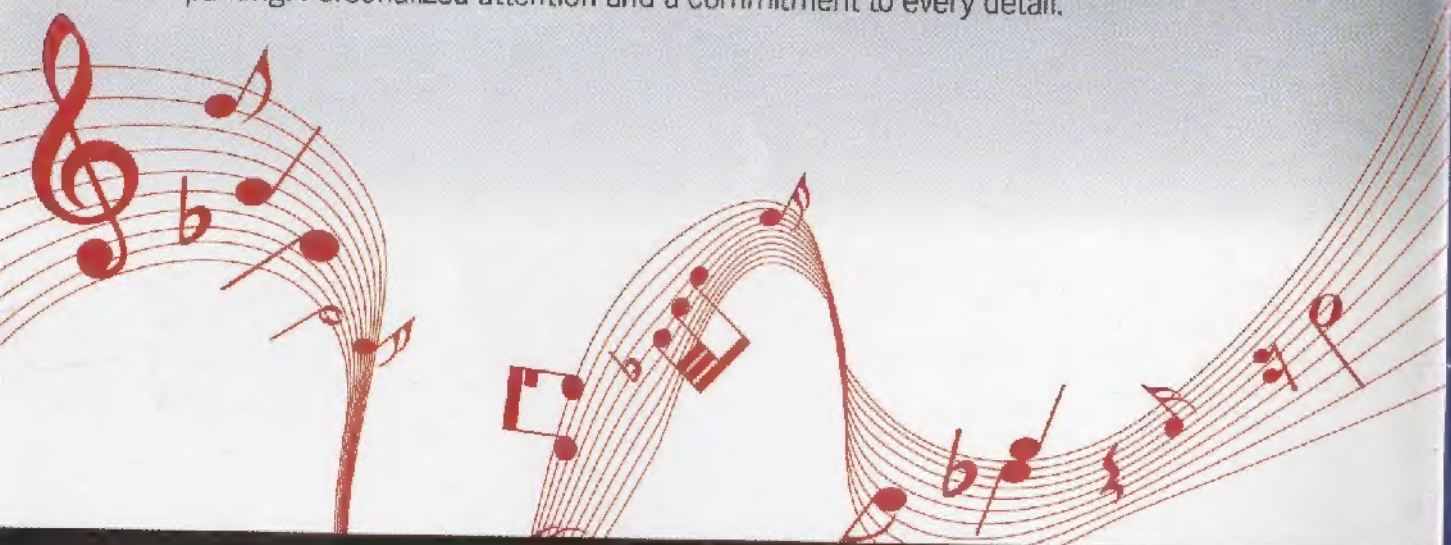
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NJPAC

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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A 'REEL' EXCITING SPECTACLE

The thundering sound of *Riverdance* is matched only by the roar of the crowd

By Maggie Gilroy



During the 1994 *Eurovision Song Contest*, Michael Flatley and Jean Butler danced a seven-minute Irish dance routine for the interval act, which was seen by 300 million viewers worldwide. The performance was so well-received that it was expanded into a full-length stage show, titled *Riverdance*.

Riverdance premiered in Dublin in February 1995, hitting the North American stage for the first time in 1996 at Radio City Music Hall. Since then, it won the 1997 Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Recording and played on Broadway from 2000-2001. The show toured 46 countries across six continents and will return to NJPAC with a 20th anniversary tour for five performances, from April 22-24.

During *Riverdance*'s last engagement at the Arts Center in April 2008, it set a box office record in sales for a multi-performance residency at NJPAC.

"*Riverdance* combines world-class dance with the theatricality of 21st century lighting, set design and special effects to create a mesmerizing performance that's great for families," says NJPAC Executive Vice President and Executive Producer David Rodriguez. "So given its anniversary, and the interest in Irish dance that has permeated our mainstream culture, it was appropriate to bring it back."

Riverdance Associate Director Padraic Moyles calls the 20th anniversary tour "the strongest show we've ever had."

"I think there's an understood value to the brand that you know you're always going to get the best and I think that's why there's still an audience there," says Moyles, an 18-year-veteran of the show.

Riverdance features a series of songs and dance numbers that depict Irish legend while including other non-Irish dance forms, such as flamenco, tap and Russian dance. It is directed by John McCollgan and composed by Bill Whelan. In addition, it contains set design by Robert Ballagh, costumes by Joan Bergin, lighting by John Comiskey and sound by Michael O'Gorman.

While changes include updated scenic design, costumes and a new dance sequence, Moyles says Whelan's score remains untouched.

"What's said so often about *Riverdance* is that it's timeless," he observes about the score. "The music in itself I think is phenomenal."



Senior Executive Producer Julian Erskine says the anniversary tour is "brighter, fresher (and) newer than it was." Included in this rejuvenation is a new number, "Anna Livia," named for James Joyce's personification of Dublin's River Liffey in his novel *Finnegans Wake*. "Anna Livia" replaces "Oscail an Doras" (Open the Doors) and is an all-female, a cappella hard-shoe dance.

The first new number created for *Riverdance* in almost 14 years, "Anna Livia" features choreography by John Carey and rhythms and additional text by Whelan. Although the male dancers have an all-male hard-shoe number—"Thunderstorm"—before "Anna Livia," the women did not have the same opportunity to let their hard-shoe skills shine.

The women frequently dance in ghillies, or soft shoes, a black leather shoe that resembles a ballet slipper. The hard shoe features a dense heel that makes an audible click by hitting the floor or another heel, enabling dancers to create loud, powerful rhythms with their feet. "You can close your eyes and still be entertained," says Erskine of the rumble.

The number also features a newly designed wardrobe by Bergin, the Emmy Award-winning costumer for *The Tudors*.

Riverdance has updated its scenic design to keep pace with advances in technology. While Ballagh's paintings have always been projected behind the dancers, animation will be incorporated as well.

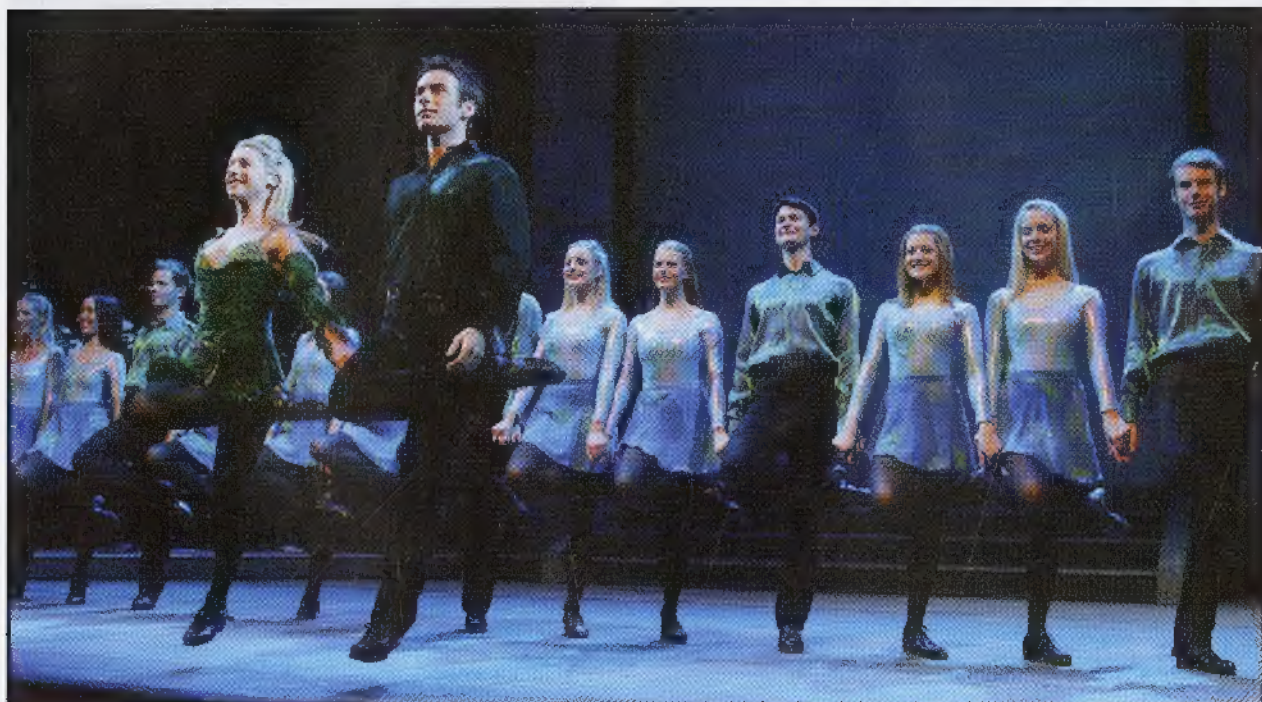
Bergin has updated several other costumes in the show to give them a contemporary flair. Accommodations in fittings were also made for the more athletic, muscular bodies of the cast. Erskine attributes the changing physiques of the company members through the years to *Riverdance*'s role as the first Irish dance show, which produced professional Irish dancers. An ensemble of pros—not dancers who performed Irish dance in their spare time—meant the creative team not only had to take another look at costuming, but emphasize proper nutrition and health awareness.

"Before *Riverdance*, there was no such thing as an 'Irish dancer,'" Moyles says. "You couldn't make a living out of it. It was a competitive, amateur hobby."

Riverdance has brought the popularity of Irish dance to a worldwide audience. According to an article by *Irish Central*, *Riverdance* has been seen by over 25 million people in 465 venues around the globe. It has traveled 700,000 miles, required 15,000 hours of rehearsal on tour, and even stocked 14,000 dance shoes.

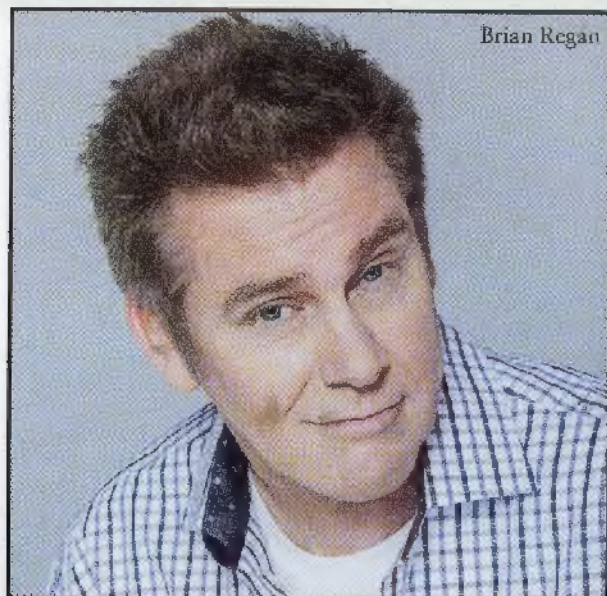
FcisWorx.com, a site where Irish dancers gain information about amateur competitions, counts eight dance schools in New Jersey alone. But the art form is not just popular with those who have ties to the Emerald Isle. Moyles says *Riverdance*'s story is relevant to any culture that connects with themes of oppression and leaving home for a new opportunity.

Riverdance precedes Celtic Woman's *Destiny Tour* on June 30. Tickets for all events may be purchased at njpac.org.



Make way for the kings of comedy — they rule the house this winter

By Mark Mobley



As the campaign season kicks into high gear, there's nothing better than seeing someone who's funny on purpose.

NJPAC has a late-winter slate of comics guaranteed to please every likely voter—from New Jersey's own Tom Papa to bills of urban comics led by Mike Epps and Bill Bellamy, from the family-friendly Brian Regan to the (at times) gleefully scatological Gilbert Gottfried. And some couples may get help sorting themselves out on Valentine's Day weekend, through the hilarious interplanetary lessons of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, a one-man show based on the massively popular 1993 book by John Gray.

For David Rodriguez, NJPAC's Executive Vice President and Executive Producer, the appeal of comedians—aside from the laughs—is their ability to attract a wide variety of audiences. These include, Rodriguez says, “a younger demographic who may not have decided to come to NJPAC in the past. And that can be urban audiences, with people like Kevin Hart, where we did four sold-out shows, to people like Regan. It really lets us expand our palette of constituencies, who haven't had the chance to come to NJPAC and see what a great space it is for live entertainment.”

And comedians love the space just as much. Hometown boy Artie Lange shot his 2014 Comedy Central special (*Artie Lange: The Stench of Failure*) here. And when John

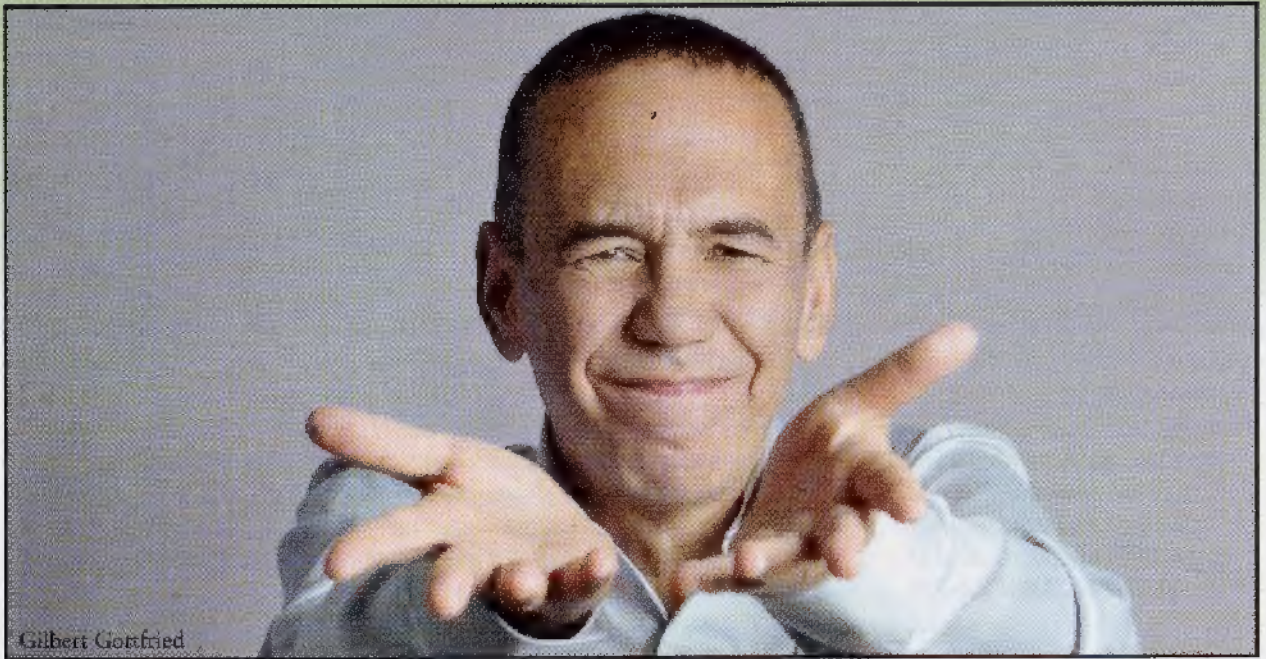
Leguizamo filmed his Drama Desk Award-winning solo show *Ghetto Klown*, he did it not on Broadway or during his world tour, but in Newark.

“Our hope,” Rodriguez says, “is to really create a home for people to try out new material, and once that material is refined, to package that product and take it to the rest of the world.” Sometimes the packaging process simply means supplying a bigger box. Papa, after two decades of taking his good-natured comedy to clubs and late-night TV, and serving as host of Jerry Seinfeld's NBC show *Marriage Ref*, is making one of his first standup appearances in a large hall.



“In coming to comedy at NJPAC,” Rodriguez says, “you really see the work in its development, and I think that's what's most exciting. At the same time, there's a credibility to the stage. You're sharing the same stage with a Seinfeld or Kevin Hart or any of the number of major comedians who are also sharing. So, the bar is high. The expectations are high, and we're really fortunate that the artists have delivered.”

One of the comedians Rodriguez is most anticipating is Gottfried, who is making his NJPAC debut on March 11. While Gottfried can be comfortable on a big stage, he says he's sometimes nostalgic for the earlier part of his career: “It's an odd feeling,” he says.



Gilbert Gottfried

"There's something I sort of miss about those days when I'd go out and I'd be just this schmuck onstage. I'm still a schmuck onstage, but I'm a well-known schmuck onstage now."

And he's known for more than just his comedy and his one-of-a-kind voice, which is like a tortured aural squint. *The Village Voice* picked his *Gilbert Gottfried's Amazing Colossal Podcast*, a relaxed, fascinating series of long-form interviews largely about obscure corners of the entertainment world, as the best podcast of 2015.

"When I first started it," he says, "I wanted to interview older stars for the most part, and I didn't think anybody would care. And I get these emails from people saying, 'I had no idea who you were talking to or who you were talking about, but I liked it anyway.' And they start looking up who the person is, so it becomes like a fun homework assignment."

And Gottfried has appeared on *Turner Classic Movies* alongside Robert Osborne, professing a love for and extremely deep knowledge of vintage Hollywood, and reported to Donald Trump on *The Celebrity Apprentice*. Gottfried has also developed a side career as a cartoon voiceover actor in such films as *Aladdin* and TV shows including *Superman: The Animated Series* and *Family Guy*.

This diversified success has emerged despite infamous instances of very publicly testing the bounds of political correctness—from a notorious set shortly after 9/11 that was captured in the gleefully foul film *The Aristocrats* to some misadventures on Twitter.

"I feel like everything at the end of the day is a joke," Gottfried says. "And my feeling is like, every joke should come with a set of instructions that says, 'If you like the joke, laugh. If you don't like it, don't laugh. Nowadays, you could make a joke about the Titanic, and you could talk about a date you went on or a business deal you had or anything and say, 'Oh, that was a regular Titanic,' and laugh about it. Now, loads of people died on the Titanic, so what makes it okay now?"

Gottfried says the rise of Trump as a candidate may have sent a signal about a shift in attitudes, at least among some audiences. "What I've noticed with Trump," Gottfried says, "is he does say stuff that offends a lot of people, and he's getting a lot of support. And I think maybe that means the whole political correctness thing people are getting tired of. So now someone's saying something totally un-politically correct people are reacting to."

As for the real estate mogul's own reaction to Gottfried? "The only time I dealt with Mr. Trump was on *Celebrity Apprentice*," the comedian says. "He fired me, of course. But the words 'Gilbert Gottfried, you're fired,' I've heard several times in my life, so it didn't faze me at all."

Mark Mobley is a writer, editor, producer and performer in Wilmington, Del. What Color Is Your Brother?, his new documentary play with music about race relations in Macon, Ga., premieres February 27 at the Macon Grand Opera House.



Get ready for the British Invasion with **RAIN: A Tribute to The Beatles**, the world's most acclaimed, multimedia spectacular salute to Paul, John, George and Ringo, back by popular demand on **February 25!** Comedian and actor **Mike Epps** of *Survivor's Remorse* and *Hangover 3* fame slings his sharp observations about life at large in a **Festival of Laughs** with special guests Gary Owen and Cocoa Brown on **March 11**. The international Irish dance phenomenon **Riverdance** is back! Of all the performances to emerge from Ireland—in rock, music, theater and film—nothing has carried the energy, the sensuality and the spectacle of **Riverdance**. Don't miss the only area appearance of this tour—at NJPAC **April 22–24!**

Calendar of Events

February–June 2016

All events and programs subject to change without notice.

FEBRUARY 2016

Sat	Feb 6	2pm	Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company – <i>Year of the Monkey</i>
Sat	Feb 6	6pm	<i>Simply Streisand</i>
Sat	Feb 6	8:30pm	<i>Simply Streisand</i>
Sun	Feb 7	2pm	Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company – <i>Year of the Monkey</i>
Fri	Feb 12	8pm	Babyface with After7
Sat	Feb 13	2pm	<i>Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus – Live!</i>
Sat	Feb 13	8pm	<i>Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus – Live!</i>
Sun	Feb 14	11am	Dorthaan's Place: The Antoinette Montague Experience
Sun	Feb 14	1pm	Dorthaan's Place: The Antoinette Montague Experience
Sun	Feb 14	2pm	<i>Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus – Live!</i>
Sun	Feb 14	7pm	<i>Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus – Live!</i>
Sun	Feb 14	7pm	<i>Valentine's All-Star Comedy Jam: Bill Bellamy, Adele Givens and more!</i>
Thu	Feb 18	8pm	New Jersey Speakers Series: Diana Nyad
Fri	Feb 19	8pm	<i>Disney FANTASIA – Live in Concert</i>
Sat	Feb 20	3pm	NJMEA All-State Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band & Women's Choir
Sat	Feb 20	8pm	Tom Papa, comedian
Thu	Feb 25	8pm	RAIN: A Tribute to The Beatles

MARCH 2016

Sun	Mar 6	11am	Dorthaan's Place Jazz Brunch: Bobby Sanabria & Quarteto Ache'
Sun	Mar 6	1pm	Dorthaan's Place Jazz Brunch: Bobby Sanabria & Quarteto Ache'
Thu	Mar 10	8pm	<i>Cinderella</i> – Russian National Ballet Theatre
Fri	Mar 11	8pm	Gilbert Gottfried
Fri	Mar 11	8pm	Mike Epps: <i>Festival of Laughs</i>
Sat	Mar 12	7:30pm	with special guest Gary Owen & Cocoa Brown
Mon	Mar 14	6pm	Wofabe African Dance & Drum Festival
			Newark History Society: <i>Newark's Jewish Frontier: Weequahic and Its High School</i>
Thu	Mar 17	8pm	New Jersey Speakers Series: Frank Abagnale
Fri	Mar 18	8pm	Johnny Mathis
Fri	Mar 18	8pm	Dodge Poetry at NJPAC: <i>Newark Voices</i>
Sat	Mar 19	2pm	<i>Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat</i>
Sat	Mar 19	8pm	Academy of St Martin in the Fields – Joshua Bell, conductor and violin
Wed	Mar 23	8pm	Ethan Bortnick, piano

APRIL 2016

Wed	Apr 6	8pm
Fri	Apr 8	8pm
Sat	Apr 9	6pm
Sat	Apr 9	8:30pm
Sun	Apr 10	11am
Sun	Apr 10	1pm
Sun	Apr 10	7pm
Thu	Apr 14	8pm
Fri	Apr 15	8pm
Sun	Apr 17	4pm
Sun	Apr 17	7pm
Mon	Apr 18	6pm

Thu	Apr 21	8pm
Fri	Apr 22	8pm
Fri	Apr 22	8pm
Sat	Apr 23	12:30pm
Sat	Apr 23	2pm
Sat	Apr 23	8pm
Sun	Apr 24	2pm
Sun	Apr 24	7pm
Thu	Apr 28	8pm
Fri	Apr 29	7pm

Fri	Apr 29	7pm
Sat	Apr 30	2pm

Dancing in the Streets: Motown's Greatest Hits
Jersey Moves! Festival of Dance – Carolyn Dorfman Dance
 Lea DeLaria
 Lea DeLaria
 Dorthaan's Place Jazz Brunch: Freddy Cole Quartet
 Dorthaan's Place Jazz Brunch: Freddy Cole Quartet
 One Night of Queen featuring Gary Mullen and The Works
 New Jersey Speakers Series: Michio Kaku
 San Francisco Symphony – Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor
 Miche Camilo – Solo Jazz Piano
 Miche Camilo – Solo Jazz Piano
 Newark History Society: *Puritans, Protestors, and Patriots: Newark in the Colonial Period*
 Mint Condition and Floetry
 Dodge Poetry at NJPAC: *PoemJazz*
Riverdance 20 Years – The Anniversary Tour
 WBGO Free Kid's Jazz Concert
Riverdance 20 Years – The Anniversary Tour
Riverdance 20 Years – The Anniversary Tour
Riverdance 20 Years – The Anniversary Tour
Riverdance 20 Years – The Anniversary Tour
 Richard Marx
 NJPAC Stage Exchange: David Lee White and Passage Theatre Company (Trenton), a reading of *Sanism*
 Shen Yun
 Shen Yun

MAY 2016

Sun	May 1	2pm
Sun	May 1	3pm
Fri	May 6	8pm
Sat	May 7	7pm
Sat	May 7	8pm
Sun	May 8	3pm
Sun	May 8	8pm
Sat	May 14	6pm
Sat	May 14	8:30pm
Fri	May 20	7pm

Sat	May 21	8pm
Fri	May 27	7pm
Fri	May 27	8pm

Sat	May 28	8pm
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Shen Yun
 Well Fargo Jazz For Teens Concert
 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
 Jonathan's Choice: Cyrille Aimée & Kate McGarry
 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
 Brian Regan, comedian
 You've Got a Friend: The Music of the Brill Building
 You've Got a Friend: The Music of the Brill Building
 NJPAC Stage Exchange: Nikkole Salter and Luna Stage
 reading of *Indian Head*
 Jessye Norman, soprano, with New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
 Hispanic Youth Showcase
 Dodge Poetry at NJPAC: *Oigo Cantar a América: Latino/a Poets with Bobby Sanabria*
Sinatra at the Movies

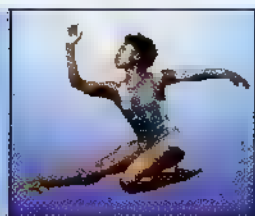
JUNE 2016

Thu	Jun 2	7pm
Fri	Jun 3	7:30pm
Sun	Jun 5	3pm
Sat	Jun 11	8pm
Sat	Jun 18	7:30pm
Fri	Jun 17	8pm
Mon	Jun 20	6pm

Fri	Jun 24	7pm
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Thu	Jun 30	8pm
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Colors of the Rainbow Team Match
Jersey Moves! Festival of Dance: Nai Ni Chen Dance Company
 Richard Nader's 27th Annual Summer Doo Wop Concert
Invincible: A Glorious Tribute to Michael Jackson – ALL NEW SHOW!
 Bill Charlap – Solo Jazz Piano
Jersey (New) Moves! Emerging Choreographers (on sale 2/26)
 Newark History Society: Progressives and Reformers:
 Newark Takes the Lead
 NJPAC Stage Exchange: Chisa Hutchinson and Playwrights
 Theatre of NJ - reading of *Surely Goodness and Mercy*
 Celtic Woman – *The Destiny Tour*



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater arrives for its annual Mother's Day weekend engagement performing the premieres of *Exodus* and *Piazzolla Caldera*, as well as Company favorites *Cry*, *Night Creature*, *Awakening*, *Open Door*, *Revelations* and more! **May 6–8.**

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NJPAC

NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Prudential Hall

Friday, March 11, 2016 at 8pm

NJPAC presents

Mike Epps *Festival of Laughs*

featuring

Gary Owen

and

Cocoa Brown

**This performance is presented in association with
North American Entertainment.**

As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please be sure to silence all mobile devices. The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs are strictly prohibited.

HORIZON FOUNDATION COMEDY SERIES

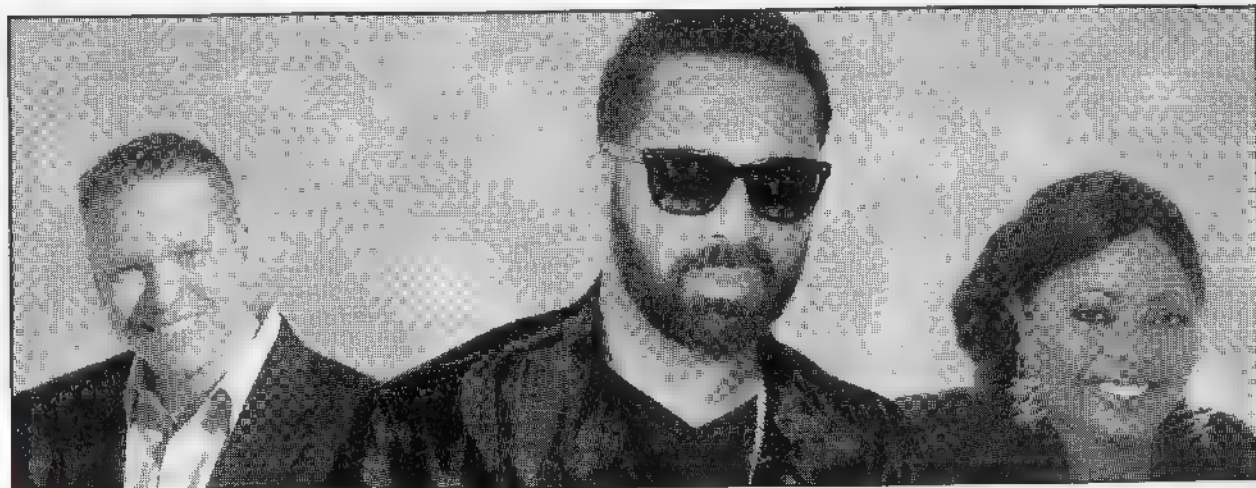


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Meet the Artists



MIKE EPPS

With a career that shot straight to stardom, Mike is lauded as one of the funniest comedic actors in the business today. Epps will next be seen starring as *Uncle Buck* on ABC, based on the movie of the same name. He also appears in Season 3 of the popular Starz series *Survivor's Remorse*, a role that recently earned him a NAACP Image Award nomination. Mike will also star in *Meet the Blacks* out on April 1st, a comedy/horror movie spoofing the hit film *The Purge*.

Mike is perhaps best known for perfecting the role of "Day-Day" opposite Ice Cube in the popular *Friday* film franchise *Next Friday* and *Friday After Next*. Mike's impressive film resume led him to the giant role of Richard Pryor in the much-anticipated biopic of the comedic legend. Directed by Lee Daniels, the film will shoot in March 2016 and will also star Oprah Winfrey, Eddie Murphy and Kate Hudson.

Epps began his career as a standup comic, and is always sure to make the time for both. Between filming, Mike can be found on the road with his wildly successful comedy tours.

GARY OWEN

Actor/comedian Gary Owen can be seen on April 1st opposite Mike Epps and Mike Tyson in the film *Meet The Blacks*, a comedy/horror movie spoofing the hit film *The Purge*. (Gary plays one of the purgers.) He recently filmed a pilot for a reality show for BET following his family life in Cincinnati.

Gary is one of the stars of the Screen Gems comedy *Think Like A Man Too* and the original film *Think Like A Man*, both opening #1 at the box office. He was seen last year in the Universal comedy *Ride Along* with Ice

Cube and Kevin Hart. Gary's hit Showtime special, *I Agree With Myself*, which premiered in 2015, is still airing on the network.

Gary served in the Navy for six years and got his start in stand-up comedy when he was stationed in San Diego. He and was named "Funniest Serviceman in America." Over the years, he has been embraced by African-American audiences with his take on being in a biracial marriage and as the father of three kids. In fact, *Ebony* magazine recently proclaimed Gary "Black America's Favorite White Comedian." Gary's credits include a recurring role as "Zach" the barber on Tyler Perry's *House of Payne* and he co starred in the films *Daddy Day Care*, *Rebound* and *Little Man*.

COCOA BROWN

Actress and comedian Cocoa Brown is undeniably one of the most talented comics and performers of this generation. This Virginia native assails her craft with such passion and soul-searching veracity, when she claims a stage the ensuing act is nothing short of a force of a nature.

The fiery performer, whose credits include Tyler Perry's critically acclaimed OWN comedy series *For Better or Worse* has assembled an extensive body of work. She has performed on top rated comedy shows including BET's *Comic View* and *One Mic Stand*, and *Showtime at the Apollo*.

Today, she exemplifies mind-blowing humor, daring drama and contemporary reality wrapped in a boundlessly energetic package. She is currently writing a revealing autobiography and producing her highly anticipated one-woman show, *Confessions of a Suicidal Diva*.



NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Victoria Theater

Friday, March 11, 2016 at 8pm

NJPAC presents

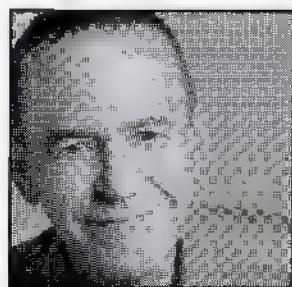
Gilbert Gottfried

As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please be sure to silence all mobile devices. The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs are strictly prohibited.



This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Meet the Artist



GILBERT GOTTFRIED

At the young age of 15, Gilbert Gottfried began doing stand-up at open mike nights in New York City. After a few short years he became known around town as "the comedian's comedian."

After spending several years mastering the art of stand-up comedy, producers of the legendary NBC late night comedy show *Saturday Night Live* became aware of Gottfried and, in 1980, hired him as a cast member. It wasn't until a few years later when his true notoriety would begin when MTV hired him for a series of improvised and hilarious promos for the newly formed channel. This led to several television appearances on *The Cosby Show* and *Late Night with David Letterman*.

Gottfried's work in television soon led to roles in film. Most notable was his improvised scene as business manager Sidney Bernstein in the hit sequel *Beverly Hills Cop II*, for which the *New York Daily News* said, "Gilbert Gottfried steals the picture with a single scene." Aside from his glowing reputation in comedy clubs, Gottfried began to gain a reputation as the king of quirky roles in both movies and television. He appeared in such movies as *Problem Child*, *Problem Child II*, *Look Who's Talking II* and *The Adventures of Ford Fairlane*. He was also the host of the very popular late night movie series *USA Up All Night*.

After his stellar performance as the wise cracking parrot, Iago, in the Disney classic *Aladdin*, Gottfried became one of the most recognizable voiceover talents, lending his voice to several commercials, cartoons and movies, including the frustrated duck in the AFLAC Insurance commercials. Gottfried is the voice of DIGIT in the long running PBS Series *Cyberchase*. His signature voice can also be heard on the Comedy Central series, *The Annoying Orange*, the voice of the horse on *Family Guy*, Mr. Mxyzptlk in the new *Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham* video game, and Abraham Lincoln in *A Million Ways to Die in the West*.

Gottfried appeared on the ABC reality series *Celebrity Wife Swap*, swapping with Alan Thicke, numerous Comedy Central Roasts and the Comedy Central series, *The Burn with Jeff Ross*. Gottfried's *Fifty Shades of Grey* reading (College Humor) received over 5 million views on YouTube.

Gilbert has been a guest on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Late Show with Seth*

Meyers, *@Midnight with Chris Hardwick* and numerous appearances on *The Howard Stern Show*. He also has had a recurring role on *Law and Order SVU* as TARU tech Leo Gerber.

Gottfried appeared in the hit comedy documentary *The Aristocrats*, with *Entertainment Weekly* saying that "out of the 101 comedians who appear on screen, no one is funnier—or more disgusting—than Gilbert Gottfried."

In addition, Gottfried, a classic movie lover, was a guest programmer on TCM. He mock complained to TCM host Robert Osborne that choosing only four films out of all those available was "the worst homework assignment ever!"

Gilbert Gottfried Dirty Jokes was released on both DVD and CD, featuring 50 non-stop minutes of Gottfried telling the funniest and filthiest jokes ever. The show was filmed live at the Gotham Comedy Club in New York City. Also featured on the DVD are some of the funniest bonus features ever, including wild stories, indignant ranting and celebrity impressions.

Rubber Balls and Liquor is Gilbert Gottfried's hilarious first-ever book—part memoir, part twisted social commentary and part scratches on the bathroom wall. With this scathingly funny book of rants and musings, Gottfried sulies an entirely new medium with his dysfunctional worldview.

Oh, and did we mention the reality shows and podcast? In addition to *Celebrity Wife Swap*, Gilbert appeared NBC's *Celebrity Apprentice* where he took his first trip into the boardroom and perhaps his last. And he created his own podcast *Gilbert Gottfried's Amazing Colossal Podcast!* where he journeys back in time with some of the Hollywood icons, legends and behind the scenes talent who shaped (warped?), his childhood and influenced his unique brand of comedy. Gilbert is joined each week by his co host and late-night phone friend, fellow showbiz fanatic, and comedy writer Frank Santopadre.

As a famed comic's comic, Gottfried puts aside political correctness for his live performance and fires an onslaught of jokes that know no boundaries.

Stephen King once state about Gilbert Gottfried: "More than a national treasure, he's a secret weapon. If we had had Gilbert Gottfried in World War II, Hitler would have given up in 1942."

Gilbert, a lifelong resident of NYC, is married with two children and has never had a driver's license



NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Victoria Theater

Saturday, March 12, 2016 at 7:30pm

UMOJA DANCE COMPANY

presents

**WOFABE
AFRICAN DANCE & DRUM FESTIVAL**

10th Anniversary

On behalf of Umoja Dance Company and the Festival Committee

WE THANK YOU

for your support, love, and patience.

We are honored by all who continue to support our efforts.

Thank you for embracing the beauty and passion of African dance, drum and culture.

DANCE: CULTURE : RESPECT

Ashe... Ashe... Ashe...

WOFABE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Jana Burton, Karen L. Love, Nailah Morris, Shannel Roberts, Betty Robinson,
Christine Smith, Kai Smith, Philip S. Thomas

FESTIVAL SPONSORS

Umoja Dance Company, Newark Arts Council, Investors Foundation, NJPAC, Omega Psi Phi

DONORS 2015-16

Azza Abdin, Doris Chamberlain, Deborah Myer Davis, Michelle Doctor, Shatina Edwards,
Michelle Finikin, Lara Gonzalez, Toiya Hancock, Jodie Harris, Shakura Ismail, Carol T Jones,
Jeff Matthews, Keith Morris, Omaghitse Omagbemi, Yvonne Onque, Felicia Pierson,
Marian Shepherd, Takiyah Smith, Philip S. Thomas, Tulani Thomas, Ed Wilcher

TEACHERS

Cheryl Barclay, Eto'o Tsana, Cachet Ivey, Ronald K. Brown, Robin Gee,
Frankie Malloy IV, Parise Ogunleye

COMPANIES

AsaseYaa African American Dance Theatre
Oyu Oro Afro Cuban Experimental Dance Ensemble
Harambee Dance Company
Newark Dance Ensemble
Usaama Dance Company
Umoja Dance Company

Special Thanks To: The Festival Committee, companies, teachers, musicians, Lisa Arrington,
Yvonne Onque, Umoja & Usaama Dance Company members & parents, Sponsors, Donors,
Joanne Pringle, Muiyiwa Omisore, Derek Garrett, Matt Mrowicki, M'Bemba Bangoura,
NJPAC crew/staff, festival volunteers and vendors.

In Memoriam:

Yewande Kelley Johnson
Dancer, Teacher, Elder
...WE LOVE and MISS YOU...

As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please be sure to silence all mobile devices. The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs are strictly prohibited.



This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts

A Letter from Karen Love

Wotabe Family,

Plant a seed, add water and watch it grow. I planted the seed of wanting to start a festival in NJ with our company manager Christine Smith. Why?? I had traveled to festivals throughout the country and decided we can do this in NJ. Where? When? How? Light bulb comes on talk to my teacher and mentor M'Bemba Bangoura. Bemba: "Ok, no problem, I will help organize the teachers, drummers and companies... just tell me what you want." Plant more seeds.... Think... Who has the knowledge and professionalism to guide me in this project? Contact my mentor and friend, Philip S. Thomas. Add water... Philip: "Karen set up a meeting." Grow... 2006 to 2015 African Dance community in New Jersey has something to call their own.... WOFABE.

This journey would not have been possible without the support of ALL that have worked with us over the past ten years each in their own way. Everyone unselfishly gave their unwavering time, energy, and expertise. THANK YOU TO ALL the companies, teachers, musicians, vendors, emcees, staff, volunteers, management personnel, consultants, caterers, grant writers, security, stage crews, photographers, videographers, website managers, sponsors, donors, printers, graphic artists, principals, school coordinators, council of elders, and of course our family and friends for supporting our vision. We owe a debt of gratitude to each and every one of you.

Last, but not least, to our biggest supporter, mentor and friend Baba Chuck Davis. We met in 1991 at Duke University where I was attending the American Dance Festival. Baba scooped me up and has been my mentor ever since. We spoke for hours when I told him about my plan for the festival. Baba: "Whatever you need me to do I am ready." THANK YOU, BABA, FOR LISTENING AND BEING THE VOICE OF REASON.

Special thanks to the following for opening up their space and hearts to us: Arts High School, Science Park High School, Central High School, Newark Symphony Hall and NJPAC.

THANK YOU TO ALL THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, PAST AND PRESENT. All the emails, calls, meetings and errands allowed Wofabe to happen every year. There is no "I" in team, and your support of the festival has meant the world to me. THANK YOU.

Namaste

"The divine in me honors the divine in you"

With Sincere Gratitude,

Karen L. Love
Festival Coordinator

About the Festival

WOFABE

Mission

Wofabe African Dance and Drum Festival strives to preserve and share the finest traditions of African dance and drumming and to encourage cross cultural understanding. Wofabe celebrates the beauty of African culture and provides an outlet for groups and individuals working in these disciplines to share their talents with their peers and the community in New Jersey.

Goals

- Teach, learn and exchange historical information on specific aspects of African culture as it pertains to dance, music and drumming
- Introduce and present African dance/drum instructors to the New Jersey community
- Identify African dance resources existing in New Jersey (i.e. performance groups, instructors, venues, festivals, presenters, etc.)
- Establish a network and develop a database of teachers of African dance and drumming
- Showcase the talents of local African dance and drum ensembles

Objectives

- Demonstrate the powerful relationship and inter-connectedness between these art forms and people of all cultural backgrounds
- Create a positive outlet for youth by demonstrating that African dancing and drumming is for people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds
- Increase community education and awareness of these important art forms
- Gather and share information on the available resources
- Provide an outlet for groups and individuals working in these disciplines to share their talents with their peers and the community at large

Master/Mistress of Ceremonies

Baba Chuck Davis, Anel Salaam, Fredrika Bey, Dr. AKil Khalfani, Mama Yaa

Program

Mistress of Ceremonies

Momma D

UMOJA & USAAMA DANCE COMPANY

Artistic Director: Karen L. Love

Assistant Artistic Director: Lisa Morris

Assistant Directors: Titilayo Derricotte, Kamille King

Company Manager: Christine Smith

Musicians: M'Ten Halsey, Ray Phillip, Jana Burton, Foluso Mimy, Kiinar Zahiratu, K'rum Zahiratu

Umoja: Jana Burton, Titilayo Derricotte, Kamille King, Tamara Jones, Breana LaFortune, Titilayo Majoyeogbe, Natalie Stephens, Erlene Trumpet, Kcykiiyu Zahir, Kcyduma Zahir

Usaama: Adunni Rae Charles, Azaana Dulls, Khaleah Fraser, Laila Garrett, Nia Harris, Tadj Hayward, Tiara Knox, Niyah Law, Anayah T. Patton, Xharia Rivers, Sarai Roberts, Dondrea Taylor Stewart

West African Suite

A celebration of love and family. Journey with us as we present the dances of Maracadon, Sofa, Liberte, Doun Doun Ba

NEWARK DANCE ENSEMBLE

Speedway Avenue School

Principal: Atiba Buckman

Vice Principals: Lesia Kuziw & James Boganey

Dance Teacher: Kamille King

Dancers: Michael Tuks, Tamia Gregory, Raven Jackson, Janiese Pillar, Javier Serrano Mariely Caraballo Vargas, Monet Shears, Zahirah Smith, Yolanda Trotter, Taniyah Turner, Shawn Harris-Martinez II, Shanay Prophet, Achazyah Lucas, Manoja Nicholson, Zaniyah Woods

First Avenue School

Principal: Kathy Duke-Jackson

Vice Principals: Rashaan Monroe, Dr. Adam L. Kar

Dance Teacher: Susan Pope

Dancers: Mireicy Aquino, Ariangel Batista, Destiny Coursey, Destiny Estevez, Tiaris Lantigua, Brianza McBride, Zarielys Mercado, Naidelin Reyes, Ashley Santos

Eleve Dance Theatre

Dance Teacher: Deidre Sears

Oyu Oro Afro Cuban Experimental Dance Ensemble

Trilogía Folklórica / Folkloric Trilogy

Bembe / Vodú / Palo

Performers: Dany's "La Mora" Pérez Prades, Liethis Hechavarria, Isabel Estrada, Natalie Pardo, Momoko Hanyuda, Andrea Potter, Gabrielle Hoffman, Elieser Mendoza, Susan Rapalee, Meredith Wright, Francisco Mora Catlett, Mike Ramsey, Dylan Blanchard, Rafael Monteagudo,

Bembe, Vodú and Palo are three of the most important Afro-Cuban dance and music manifestations in Cuba. *Bembe* comes from the Yoruba people; *Vodú* from the Danomeyan Haitian presence in the eastern part of Cuba; and *Palo* from the Congo or Bantu people, they are the oldest African people in Cuba. These cultures are of the most important African contributions to the Cuban African Heritage.

BEMBE de SACO: Songs and rhythms that are originated in the eastern part of Cuba, in which Croollos celebrate their worship to the Orisha deities of the Yoruba culture, usually with tumbadoras and guiro (chckerc).

AFRO CUBAN VODU: Dances of Afro-Haitian origin that were introduced to Cuba at the end of the 18th century by immigrating Haitian Blacks who settled in the eastern part of Cuba, primarily in Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo. The musical instruments, songs and rhythms are derived from the ceremonies of the Dahomeyan people. The Patois songs retain their Haitian character and are unchanged from their original form.

Program

PALO: Dances of Congo origin introduced to Cuba during the slave trade in the Western part of the island. Congo people known as Paleros or Mayomberos in Cuba are one of the African ethnic groups that have left a strong footprint in the Cuban cultural landscape. The dance and music expresses three important factors: the power of their spirits and the communication with their ancestors manifested through their object for worshipping called Ganga; the competition of their leaders named Tata in their efforts to show the supremacy of their magic religious power; and the physical abilities through the dance with the secret of the forest using a stick called Garabato.

INTERMISSION

HARAMBEE DANCE COMPANY

In Search Of

Artistic Director/ Choreographer: Sandella Malloy

Executive Director: Frank W. Malloy III

Musical Director: Frank Malloy IV

Production Asst: Dorothy Muhammad

Sound Design: Nick Kaufman

Part I-Quest For Love

Contemporary Jazz choreography by Eddie Stockton

Solo by Anna Lisc

Part II-Struggle

Duet by Linae McDonald and Sandella Malloy

Part III-Awareness

All dancers

Part IV-Freedom

All dancers

Musicians: Kerian Cox, Kairi Lollar, Stephan Litzsey, Gabriel Rocksbury, Fareed Muhammad, Elijah Soto, Prince Amu, Etsuko Tajima, Frank Malloy III

Dancers: Shola Jones, Dianne Adkins - Forte, Becky Morrison, Linae McDonald, Keon Thoulouis, Sarai Kearse, Nao Yamada, Mica Muir, Tenacious White, Alisha Anderson, Kaleeba Coulter Moore, Anne Lise Berthelot, Nahum, Walter

Blend of song, spoken word, movement and live music to explore the human struggle to find happiness and purpose in a fast moving and constantly changing world. Can money buy love? Is money the route of alleviation? Does the accumulation of material possessions lead to a greater life? A young woman and her friends embark on a journey to find a deeper sense of well-being, peace and vitality.

ASASE YAA AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE

Djembe in the New Millennium

Company: Kofi Williams, Yao Ababio, Kwesi Nkroma, Ayanda Clarke, Senfuab Stoncy, Sekou Alaje, Kwaku Payton, Kwesi Bonsu, Zakiya Harris, Rubie Williams, Mamouna Kane, Ndack Fleming, Iusaset Bakr, Natasha Diaz, Tamara Grant, Nballou Bangoura

Djembe in the New Millennium is representative to the culture of Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater.

Our company represents the next generation of traditional and contemporary African dance and music.

Djembe in The New Millennium showcases the progression and experiences of the life of Djembe in modern day settings beginning in New York City and spreading throughout the world. With the use of rhythms and dances derived from Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Brooklyn, NY; this performance historicizes and documents significant moments of West African drumming and dance within New York City as the Mecca where artists of the genre continue to meet, exchange and celebrate legacies old and new.

FINALE

Choreography: Kamille King & Keykiiyu Zahir

Meet the Artists and Companies

KAREN L. LOVE

Wofabe Festival Coordinator

Founder/Artistic Director Umoja Dance Company

& Usaama Dance Company

Born in Montclair, Love earned her M.F.A. from New York University Tisch School of the Arts and her B.F.A. from Montclair State University, where she was awarded the Excellence in Choreography Award and the Outstanding Senior Award. She received the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship Grant, and the Harkness Choreographers Space Grant at SUNY Purchase. In 1997, Love was invited to The Bates Dance Festival in Maine as an Emerging Choreographer and later returned to teach for the Young Dancers Program. She was selected as a choreographer for the Choreographer/Dancer residency at the Yard on Martha's Vineyard, recognized in *Who's Who Among American Teacher's* 2004 and 2005 and was honored as one of the "50 Women You Should Know in Montclair, NJ." Most recently she was recognized as a "Women of Distinction" by The YWCA of Essex and West Hudson.

She traveled to Australia as a representative for the dance department of Montclair State University where she both performed and taught classes in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. She has performed with Urban Bush Women, Gailmans Newark Dance Theatre and The VonHoward Project. Love has traveled to Guinea, Morocco, Senegal and the Gambia, West Africa under the direction of Baba Chuck Davis and M'Bemba Bangoura. In January 2015 Love traveled to Cuba with Baba Chuck Davis and Danys "LaMora" Perez to study afro cuban dance and culture.

Presently, Love is the director of the Dance program at Hillside High School and director of the After School Dance Program for Hillside Public Schools District. She is a former Visiting Artist in Residence at Kent State University in Ohio, former adjunct professor at Montclair State University and former faculty member in the Junior Division at Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Love is a certified Pilates Mat Instructor and a certified Yoga instructor.

DEBORAH GRAY (*Mistress of Ceremonies*)

DeBorah, aka Momma D, is a native of Harlem, NY. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology/Education from the College of New Rochelle. She is a member of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem where she is a Mentor for the Blue Nile Rites of Passage Program, member of the Women's Ministry and serves on the Welcome and Hospitality Ministry.

For approximately 30 years, DeBora was employed for a non profit humanitarian relief agency as an Administrative Assistant, which was moved to the Office of the President. For approximately 10 years, she was the Chairperson for the Manhattan lunch time CWS CROP Hunger Walk, raising thousands of dollars to aid the needs for poor and hungry people in our community and around the world.

As an energy balancer and prayer warrior, under

the direction of Ebun Adelona, DeBorah worked for approximately five years with Iyanla Vanzant, Founder of Inner Visions, Author, Lawyer, Inspirational Speaker and television host.

She is married, a mother of two, a foster mom and a grandmother. Her love for dance has earned her recognition with Mama Lu Park's Dancers, George Sullivan Dance Troop and The Dance Africa Celebration (Chuck Davis, Artistic Director). As an Elder, she is also the Artistic Director for the Dance Africa Candle Bearers of Light and Love (the spiritual part of the program).

DeBorah also enjoys creative writing, composing poetry, home decorating, cooking, entertaining guests and the love of her family, extended family and friends.

ASASE YAA AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE

In the summer of 2001, in Brooklyn, New York, Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater emerged under the direction of Artistic Director Yao Ababio. It was the founder's belief that having a wide range of artistic skills would allow Asase Yaa to create authentic, unique productions that showcase an array of experiences to its audiences thus depicting the true richness of the African Diaspora. Kofi Osei Williams, Executive Director, Rubie Inez Williams, Director of Operations, and Kwesi Nkroma, Treasurer currently manage Asase Yaa Cultural Arts Foundation. The organization is also supported by an advisory board, which includes community leaders, artists, professors and supporters of the arts.

Fifteen years later, Asase Yaa African American Dance Theater continues to thrive on its reputation as a company of seasoned musicians, dancers and vocalists with training in various disciplines. Asase Yaa has produced seventeen concerts with over twenty two of the top African dance companies in America. Asase Yaa has also been a part of a wide range of numerous acclaimed productions including VH1's *Hip Hop Honors Awards*, the premiere of HBO's *Sing Your Song* documentary on Harry Belafonte at the Apollo Theater, *Dance Africa* Chicago and New York. Asase Yaa has also worked in partnership with Arizona State University where students participated in workshops and performances. With such community support and positive reception resulting from each production despite limited arts funding and current national economic hardship, Asase Yaa has expanded and now consists of four components: a professional dance theatre company, a school of the arts, a children's summer arts camp, and an arts in education program also known as AY T.E.A.C.H. Each of these programs has an outstanding impact on the participating children of each community where Asase Yaa bases itself.

HARAMBEE DANCE COMPANY

In Swahili Harambee means "let us pull together." Harambee Dance Company pulls together the essence of African and African-American dance and music presenting it from an innovative and exciting new contemporary perspective. Artistic Director and resident choreographer Sandella Malloy has developed a high energy repertoire that pulls together

Meet the Artists and Companies

African-based movement, modern dance forms, live percussion and original music, and vibrant costumes into captivating performances reflecting the majesty of the African Diaspora.

In 1992 husband and wife team Sandella and Frank Malloy founded 25-member Harambee Dance Company in Charleston, South Carolina. The couple relocated to New York City in 1996 and Harambee Dance Company brought its own unique blend of traditional African dance vocabulary, modern dance and contemporary themes to the tri state area.

Sandella, Frank and their son/musical director Frank IV are the nucleus of the 25-member Harambee dance family. Harambee Dance Company incorporates the traditional and contemporary to create a new style of African Dance. The company's enlightening and thought provoking presentations challenge audiences to expand their perception of dance. These are "moves" that touch the soul, and are designed to build and strengthen a greater understanding of our diverse American cultural heritage.

OYU ORO AFRO CUBAN EXPERIMENTAL DANCE ENSEMBLE

Oyu Oro is the brainchild of Danys "La Mora" Perez - international Afro-Cuban folklore performer, choreographer, teacher and dance ethnologist from Santiago de Cuba. The company is committed to the preservation of Afro-Cuban folklore as well as to encourage the cross-cultural understanding of the dance and music forms derived from African culture. While Oyu Oro's traditional repertoire pays tribute to African lineages derived from the Yoruba, Congo, Carabali, Arará and Dahomean cultures of West Africa and Haiti, the popular dance choreographies also celebrate the national popular Cuban heritage.

In February 2007, Oyu Oro presented the world premiere of *Palenque*, an epic poem in Afro-Cuban folklore and the company's first evening length work, at La Mama Annex Stage. La Mora assembled a gathering of seasoned Afro-Cuban artists in America, including 20-plus New York based dancers, vocalists and musicians. This unprecedented two-week event was greeted with rave reviews and sold out audiences.

Since 2009, Oyu Oro has been one of the key members of the artist rosters represented by the Center for Traditional Music and Dance.

Oyu Oro aspires to create a work that will serve as an informational tool for the researchers in the academic field as well as a source of enjoyment for audiences of all ages and multicultural backgrounds who seek a greater development of "art among people."

UMOJA DANCE COMPANY

Umoja Dance Company was established in 1993 by Karen L. Love as a vehicle to educate, preserve and present dance as a communal and spiritual expression of life. Umoja creates a nurturing environment that encourages cross cultural exchange and celebrates the versatility of the human spirit. Umoja, the Kiswahili word for "Unity," continues to adapt aspects of African and Caribbean culture into their work. Umoja's fusion of modern

and West African dance reflects the evolution of movement and spirit becoming one.

In 2012, Karen Love opened Umoja Dance Studio in Vaux Hall, NJ. The studio and company offer concerts, classes, residencies, interactive programs with audience participation, master classes, lecture demonstrations and outdoor performances. Our extensive education outreach program elicits open dialogue between children, artists and audiences to celebrate the differences of our diverse backgrounds.

Past performances: LABD Conference at Duke University, Montclair State University, Montclair Public Library, Newark Museum, Lincoln Center Oat of Doors, NJPAC Kwanzaa, NJPAC Tribute to the elders, Channel 4 NBC Today, SOPAC, Aaron Davis Hall, Symphony Space, Centenary College, Newark Symphony Hall, Essex County College, Rutgers University. www.umojadancestudio.org, www.umojadance.com

USAAMA DANCE COMPANY

Usaama, "Precious" in Swahili, is a pre professional performing youth dance company founded in 1995 by Karen Love. The company strives to give today's youth a sense of pride, culture and knowledge through dance. Usaama is dedicated to the preservation of African dance and the exploration of modern dance. The children are exposed to professional artists and performing venues so they can learn the discipline required of all artists. This opportunity enhances their dance technique, provides a quality team experience, develops life skills and develops a commitment necessary to maintain a well-rounded healthy lifestyle. Company members are expected to perform in an outstanding manner throughout the year on and off the dance floor. All students must maintain a "B" average in school in order to remain in the company.

NEWARK DANCE ENSEMBLE

The Newark Dance Ensemble is comprised of students in grades 1-8 who participate in the dance programs at their local schools. Dance educators in the Newark Public School system, Nikkia T. Neal, Susan Pope, Janelle Smith-Reed, and Kamille King came together and selected their most skilled and willing students to afford them performance opportunities that will help mold and shape them into professional artists. To date these students have performed for the Wofabe: African Dance and Drum Festival and the Newark Public School's Dance Festival. Our vision is to continue to grow and provide even more performance opportunities around the country for these hopeful artists, inspiring them to pursue professional dance careers.

UMOJA DANCE STUDIO

2120 Springfield Ave
Vaux Hall, NJ
African Dance, Modern Dance, Ballet,
Jazz/Hip-Hop, Capoeira, African Drumming.
Ages 4 Adult
Registration is ongoing
www.umojadancestudio.org



NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Prudential Hall

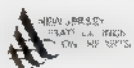
Friday, March 18, 2016 at 8pm

NJPAC presents

Johnny Mathis

The 60th Anniversary Concert Tour

As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please be sure to silence all mobile devices. The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs are strictly prohibited.



This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Meet the Artist



JOHNNY MATHIS

The fourth of seven children, John Royce Mathis was born on September 30, 1935 in Gilmer, Texas to Clem and Mildred Mathis. As a small boy, the family moved to Post Street in San Francisco. It was there that he learned an appreciation of music from his father who taught him his first song, "My Blue Heaven." At age eight, his father purchased an old upright piano for \$25. When he brought it home, it wouldn't fit through the front door. So that evening, Johnny stayed up all night to watch his father dismantle the piano, get it into the small living room of their basement apartment and then reassemble it. Clem Mathis, who worked briefly as a musician back in Texas playing the piano and singing on stage, would continue to teach his son many songs and routines. Johnny had proven to be the most eager of the children to learn all about music. He sang in the church choir, school functions, community events, for visitors in their home as well as amateur shows in the San Francisco area.

Johnny was 13 years old when Clem took him to see Connie Cox, a Bay Area voice teacher, who agreed to take on the youngster in exchange for his doing odd jobs around her house. Johnny studied with Connie for six years learning vocal scales and exercises, voice production, classical and operatic skills.

At George Washington High School, Johnny was known not only for his singing ability but his athleticism as well. He became a star athlete on the track and field team as a high jumper and hurdler and played on the basketball team.

In 1954, Johnny enrolled at San Francisco State College with the intention of being an English and Physical Education teacher. While there, Johnny set a high jump record of 6'-5 1/2". This is still on the College's Top 15 list and was only two inches short of the Olympic record of the time. Just as when he was in high school, Johnny's name was frequently mentioned in the sports sections of the Northern California newspapers. He was often referred to as "the best all around athlete to come out of the San Francisco Bay Area."

A fellow student, whose sextet was working at the Black Hawk nightclub, brought Johnny in for a Sunday afternoon jam session. It was at the Black Hawk that Helen Noga, co-owner of the club, first heard him sing. She decided that she wanted to manage his career.

In early September of 1955, Johnny landed a job singing weekends at Ann Dee's 440 Club. After repeated attempts, Helen convinced George Avakian, then head of Jazz A&R at Columbia, to see him. Avakian came to the club, heard Johnny sing and sent the now famous telegram to his record company: "Have found phenomenal 19-year-old boy who could go all the way. Send blank contracts."

Avakian left for New York after telling Johnny that he would eventually send for him. Johnny continued his studies at San Francisco State and gained additional fame as a high jumper. In early 1956, Johnny was asked to attend the trials for the 1956 Olympic teams that would travel to Melbourne, Australia that summer. At the same time, Columbia Records requested that Johnny come to New York to start arrangements for his first recording session. Clem helped his son decide that his future and best interests were with the recording company. So, Johnny gave up his chance to become a member of the USA Olympic Team. He went to New York to record his first album in March of 1956.

The first album was a collection of jazz oriented renditions of popular standards entitled *Johnny Mathis: A New Sound In Popular Song*. It included jazz musicians Gil Evans, John Lewis and Teo Macero and songs like "Angel Eyes," "Easy to Love" and "Bahia." The album enjoyed only moderate success because jazz vocal albums were not good sellers. Nevertheless, Johnny remained in New York and landed bookings at some of the leading nightclubs such as the Village Vanguard, The Blue Angel and Basin Street East.

Soon, Columbia placed Johnny under the supervision of producer Mitch Miller. Mitch favored using Johnny's voice to sing soft, romantic ballads. In the fall of 1956 at his second recording session, Johnny recorded two singles. These songs were to become among his most popular all-time greatest hits: "Wonderful, Wonderful" and "It's Not For Me To Say." Subsequently, MGM Studios signed Johnny to sing "It's Not For Me To Say" in the film *Lizzie*. He played a tavern piano bar singer. In 1958, Johnny made another motion picture appearance. This time it was for 20th Century Fox in *A Certain Smile*. In this movie, he sang the title song playing himself in an elegant nightclub scene. Since then, Johnny's voice has been used in countless Hollywood movies for theme songs, background music and to enhance a particular setting or segment.

"Wonderful, Wonderful" and "It's Not For Me To Say" reached their peaks on the *Billboard* pop chart in July of 1957. These successes were followed by the monumental single "Chances Are" which became Johnny's first #1 hit.

Meet the Artist

In June of 1957, Johnny appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show" where he was introduced to the record buying public and became a national celebrity and household name. Columbia Records continued to release albums of Johnny singing beautiful and romantic ballads, classic standards and the best songs from Broadway musicals. These albums, like the singles, became immediate successes with sales in the millions. It was not uncommon for Johnny to have as many as four albums on the *Billboard* Top Albums chart at the same time. In late 1959, Johnny recorded another song that became synonymous with the name of Johnny Mathis, the Erroll Garner composition, "Misty."

Johnny's accomplishments are numerous and varied. He holds many records and has set many precedents in the music industry. In 1958, two years after being signed by Columbia Records, *Johnny's Greatest Hits* was released. It began a "Greatest Hits" tradition copied by every record company since then. *Johnny's Greatest Hits* went on to become one of the most popular albums of all time and spent an unprecedented 490 continuous weeks (almost ten years) on the *Billboard* Top Albums Chart. This record has been noted in the *Ginness Book Of World Records*.

At one point in his career, according to record historian Joel Whitburn, Johnny was one of only five recording artists to have Top 40 hits spanning each of his first four decades as a recording artist. And as of 2013 he has now had a hit in every decade of his career thanks to his lovely song with Jim Brickman "Sending You a Little Christmas" peaking at #4 on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary chart! Amazingly, his second #1 Hit Single, "Too Much, Too Little, Too Late" (recorded with Deriece Williams), came almost 21 years after his very first #1 Hit Single, "Chances Are."

Johnny has been honored to make several appearances before various heads of state. Starting in June of 1973, he sang at a State Dinner held in honor of the President of Liberia. In 1978, Johnny sang for the British Royal Family at A Command Performance held at The London Palladium. He performed for President and Mrs. Reagan at the State Dinner held in honor of the Prime Minister of Japan in April of 1987. Four years later in April of 1991, he sang for President and Mrs. Bush in honor of the President of Nicaragua. In May of 1994 Johnny sang for President and Mrs. Clinton (along with the other five living First Ladies, at a very special First Ladies Tribute.

He has also been honored by entertainment heads of state. In June of 1972, he was awarded his own star on the famous Hollywood Walk of Fame. He has participated in the Academy Awards presentation many times to sing the song nominated in the "Best Song" category.

Johnny has received five Grammy nominations. The first was for "Misty" in 1960 in the category of "Best Male Vocal Performance - Single Record or Track." The second was in 1992 for "In a Sentimental Mood / Mathis Sings Ellington" in the category of "Best Traditional Pop Performance." He was also nominated in 2006 for *Isn't It Romantic* and again in 2011 for *Let It Be Me - Mathis In Nashville* in the category of "Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album."

His latest nomination occurred in 2014 for "Sending You A Little Christmas" also for Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album.

Johnny has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame three times so far for "Chances Are," "Misty" and "It's Not For Me To Say." Most impressive of all is his 2003 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

In 2004 he sang "Over the Rainbow" with Ray Charles on Mr. Charles' *Genius Loves Company*. (Johnny was very honored that Mr. Charles requested the song be played at his memorial service.) Also in 2004, Johnny recorded *Isn't It Romantic*—a standards CD that was released in February 2005.

2006 was a very busy year for Johnny, marking his impressive 50th anniversary as a recording star. *Johnny Mathis - Gold: A 50th Anniversary Celebration* and *A 50th Christmas Celebration* were both released and PBS taped its special *Wonderful, Wonderful*. The PBS special was later released on DVD as *Johnny Mathis - Gold: A 50th Anniversary Celebration*. 2006 also marked the year that he was honored with receiving the Society of Singers coveted Ella Award.

As if this weren't enough, Johnny continues to be honored in many different ways. In 2011 he performed for former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and received the Gold Medal of the Academy of Achievement at the Academy's headquarters in Washington, D.C., acknowledging his many accomplishments throughout his career. Most recent honors and accolades include: 2013 Art Gilmore Career Achievement Award from the Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters for Radio & Television; 2013 Induction into the brand new America's Pop Music Hall of Fame; 2014 induction into the Great American Songbook Hall of Fame, as well as receiving the New Standard Award for his continuing career achievements.

In spite of a very busy tour schedule and many charity events, Johnny still finds time to enjoy a little free time. He was an avid tennis player until the late 1960s, when a good friend turned him on to his now life long love of golf. He plays golf almost every day when he's not traveling and has sung at many golf banquets such as the Ryder Cup. In 1985 and 1986, Johnny hosted his own golf tournament, The Johnny Mathis Seniors PGA Classic, which was held in Los Angeles. Johnny has also hosted a charity golf tournament, The Shell / Johnny Mathis Golf Classic, which was held in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Johnny's other favorite avocation is cooking. He is a gourmet cook who cooks for himself and often others when he's home or traveling. His mother taught him at an early age how to cook up a storm and do it well. He has enjoyed doing so all his life.

After almost 60 years as a recording artist, what's next for Johnny? "I don't think about retiring. I think about how I can keep singing for the rest of my life. I just have to pace myself."

The Chase Room

Friday, March 18, 2016 at 8pm

NJPAC presents

Dodge Poetry at NJPAC *Newark Voices*

Featuring

Patricia Smith

with Newark Poets

Marjorie Barnes

Sean Battle

Marina Carreira

Robert Hylton

Leah Jackson

Paula Neves

Jorge Sanchez

Starski

Margie 'Mia X' Johnson

Support provided by

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DODGE
POETRY PROGRAM

As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please be sure to silence all mobile devices. The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs are strictly prohibited.

Meet the Poets

NJPAC Poet-in-Residence **PATRICIA SMITH** is a four-time National Individual Grand-Slam Champion (an unsurpassed achievement) and the author of six critically-acclaimed volumes of poetry, including *Shoulda Been Jumi Savannah*, winner of the 2014 Rebekah Bobbitt Prize from the Library of Congress, among other awards. She last participated in the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival in 2012 when she performed *Blood Dazzler at the Octoroon Balls*, a collaboration with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra String Quartet in NJPAC's Prudential Hall.

MARJORIE BARNES is an Associate Professor in the English Department at Union County College where she teaches writing and critical thinking. Her career as a performance poet spans the past 25 years, including the late 1980s as a poet with Afro-One Dance, Drama and Drum Theatre and now as a New Jersey Poet-in-the-Schools with the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Marjorie has received grants from New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) to conduct a series of hip-hop/poetry workshops for performance poets in Newark, and she was also instrumental in planning and organizing NJPAC's first hip-hop festival, where she acted as guest curator and host of the festival's poetry series, *Sacred Circle Café*. A recipient of artist grants from the Puffin Foundation and the Newark Arts Council, Marjorie has a poetry CD entitled, *My Blues Ain't Over Yet*. Marjorie and her one-year-old daughter, Arayah, live in North Plainfield, NJ.

Residing in Newark by way of Camden, NJ, **SEAN BATTLE** is the result of the combination of an ambitious mother and pro wrestling theatrics. He holds an M.F.A. in Poetry from Rutgers-Newark and is the founder/ CEO of Evolve NJ, a Newark-based arts education and entertainment firm that produces *Evolution Open Mic*. Battle's first full-length poetry collection, *The Forest of Bricks*, was self-published in 2014. He is also a member of the performance ensemble The 3rd Pyramid. Learn more at seeseanbattle.com

MARINA CARREIRA is a Luso-American writer from the Ironbound area of Newark. She holds an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Rutgers University. Her work is featured or forthcoming in *The Acentos Review*, *The Writing Disorder*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Writers of the Portuguese Diaspora: An*

Anthology, *Bluestockings Magazine*, *THE FEM*, *Rock & Sling*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Paper Nautilus*, and *All We Can Hold: A Collection of Poetry on Motherhood*.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, **ROBERT HYLTON** has been performing poetry since 1996. He has been an English teacher in Newark for over 17 years, as well as a poetry club curator in many public schools, universities, community centers and churches in the tri-state area. Hylton is the curator of Slammetry, a long-standing poetry venue since 2004. He has performed at renowned venues such as the former Serengeti Plains, The Poet's Corner (Bogies), Euphoria Café and NYC's The Nuyorican Poet's Café. Hylton prides himself in mentorship and introducing writing and the art of slam poetry to young people across the tri-state area. He has represented New Jersey in national slams (NPS) from 2003-2006 as well as the popular *Southern Fried Slam* in 2008 and 2010. Hylton has been a featured guest poet on New Jersey 12's *Another View* with Candace Kelly and spotlighted in *The New York Times* and New Jersey's *The Star-Ledger*.

Advocate, Mother, Counselor and Agitator, **LEAH JACKSON**, is a published author (*Release*) and has been writing and performing all her life. Under the moniker Lyric, she has shared stages with poets and performance artists such as Jessica Care Moore, reg e gaines, Helena D. Lewis and Jamaal St. John, to name a few. As an Academic Advisor at New Jersey City University, Leah regularly presents, locally and nationally, in topics ranging from networking to LGBTIA issues. She is a Leadership Newark 2011 Fellow and board member for Bayonne Community Health Center and ArtHouse Productions. She is a sassy mother of two young men, who are her inspiration. Leah has been featured in Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry events in Newark, including its 2014 Poetry Festival.

PAULA NEVES is a native of Newark, whose writing has most recently appeared in *Writers of the Portuguese Diaspora: An Anthology*, *Pilgrimage Magazine*, *Gávea-Brown Journal*, *Luna Luna Magazine* and *Quiddity International Literary Journal*. Her artwork is featured in the Glassbook Project collections *Provisions*, *Changed Relationships After 9/11* and *Domestic Violence* (glassbookproject.org). A Canto Mundo fellow, she has also

Meet the Poets

received scholarships/residencies from the Sundress Academy for the Arts, the Luso-American Development Foundation and the Disquiet Literary Program. She is a member of the Kale Soup for the Soul collective (www.facebook.com/KaleSoupfortheSoul/), which has presented panels, readings and workshops nationwide. When not writing, she is teaching writing, watching movies or contemplating where to travel next. Follow her at @itinerantmuse or paulaneves.net.

JORGE SANCHEZ is a poet living in Newark, where he co-hosts a monthly poetry reading series called *Brick City Speaks*. He is also the co-founder of artspace Apt.16. He most recently collaborated with artists Brendan Mahoney and Hyun Cho in the poetry zine *Unlock Me 0000* as part of the Emerald City exhibition for The Gateway Project. This past summer, he participated in the Ashbery Home School program.

STARSKI is a southern gentleman, born in a northern city. Writing and performing since 1998, Starski has written and self-published two books of poetry (*Development*, 2000 and *A Sober Man's Thoughts*, 2011) and released an audio recording of poetry entitled, *A Reckoning* (2011). Co-founder and Managing Partner of *The Newark Times*, he is dedicated to cultivating the arts and art programming here in the city of Newark. He currently produces and hosts *LIVE & Direct*, a monthly spoken word and live entertainment showcase. He is also father to two beautiful, brilliant children, Sabrina and Xavier.

At Gallery Aferro every first and third Wednesday, Margie 'MIA X' Johnson hosts *People's Open Mic*, the longest running open mic in downtown Newark. She is currently developing her poetry into a performance art show entitled #bluefloozywaterfalls. When she's not being super mom to her three children, Teal, Boaz and Orchid, she is teaching Newark youth personal development through creative writing and poetry. Mia X is also an arts advocate, teacher, producer, youth developer and blogger for *The Newark Times*. "Everything about Newark is poetry, I live it and I love it <3"... Follow @lifcweimagine.

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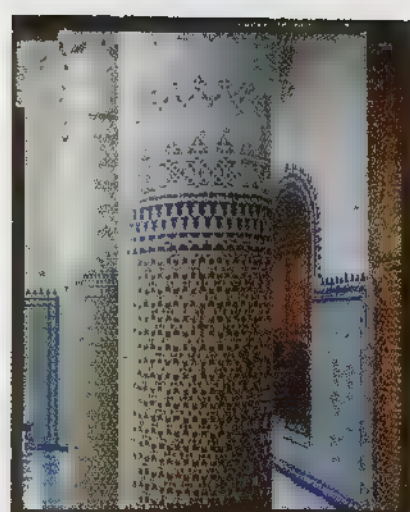
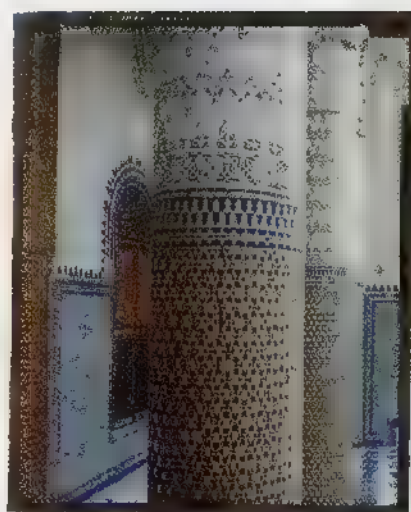
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Muse (myooz) n.

A source of inspiration; esp. a guiding genius

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NJPAC has established The Muse Society to ensure it can continue to offer life affirming educational programs and inspirational performances. The Muse Society recognizes those visionary friends who include the Arts Center in their financial planning through bequests, charitable gift annuities, insurance and other deferred gifts. For more information or to notify NJPAC of your intent to include it in your estate planning, contact Laura Fino, Senior Director of Individual Giving, at (973) 297-5122.

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We are deeply grateful to the following friends who have included the Arts Center in their estate plans and made known their future gift.

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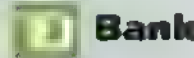
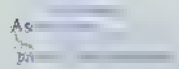
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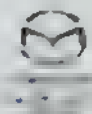
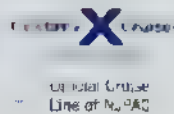
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For Your Information

As part of our **Enhanced Safety Program**, the following items are prohibited upon entry into Prudential Hall, the Victoria Theater, and all public spaces of NJPAC: backpacks, large pocketbooks, shopping bags, suitcases, briefcases, weapons, animals (except service animals).

Late Seating Policy: Latecomers and persons leaving the theater mid-show will be seated/re-seated at the discretion of the management.

Camera and Recording Equipment is Prohibited: The use of recording equipment and the taking of photographs of any performance or the possession of any device for such use without the written permission of the management is strictly prohibited.

Parking Facilities: Easy parking is available in the 1,100-car garage under Military Park, directly across from NJPAC. Safe and secure surface parking is also available.

Smoking is prohibited throughout all indoor spaces of NJPAC.

Lost and Found: Any found items should be returned to NJPAC Security or Guest Services staff. If you believe you have lost an item, call (973) 297-5868. Found clothing items will be held for 30 days after which they will be donated to a local shelter.

Mobile Device Courtesy Reminder: Please respect performers and fellow audience members by ensuring that all cellular phones and mobile devices are turned off during performances.

Newark Light Rail: NJ Transit's Newark Light Rail offers frequent service in Downtown Newark that includes a station stop at NJPAC, offering a convenient alternative to driving to a performance or event. This service is an extension of the Newark City Subway and connects all rail lines served by Newark Penn and Broad Street Stations. Other

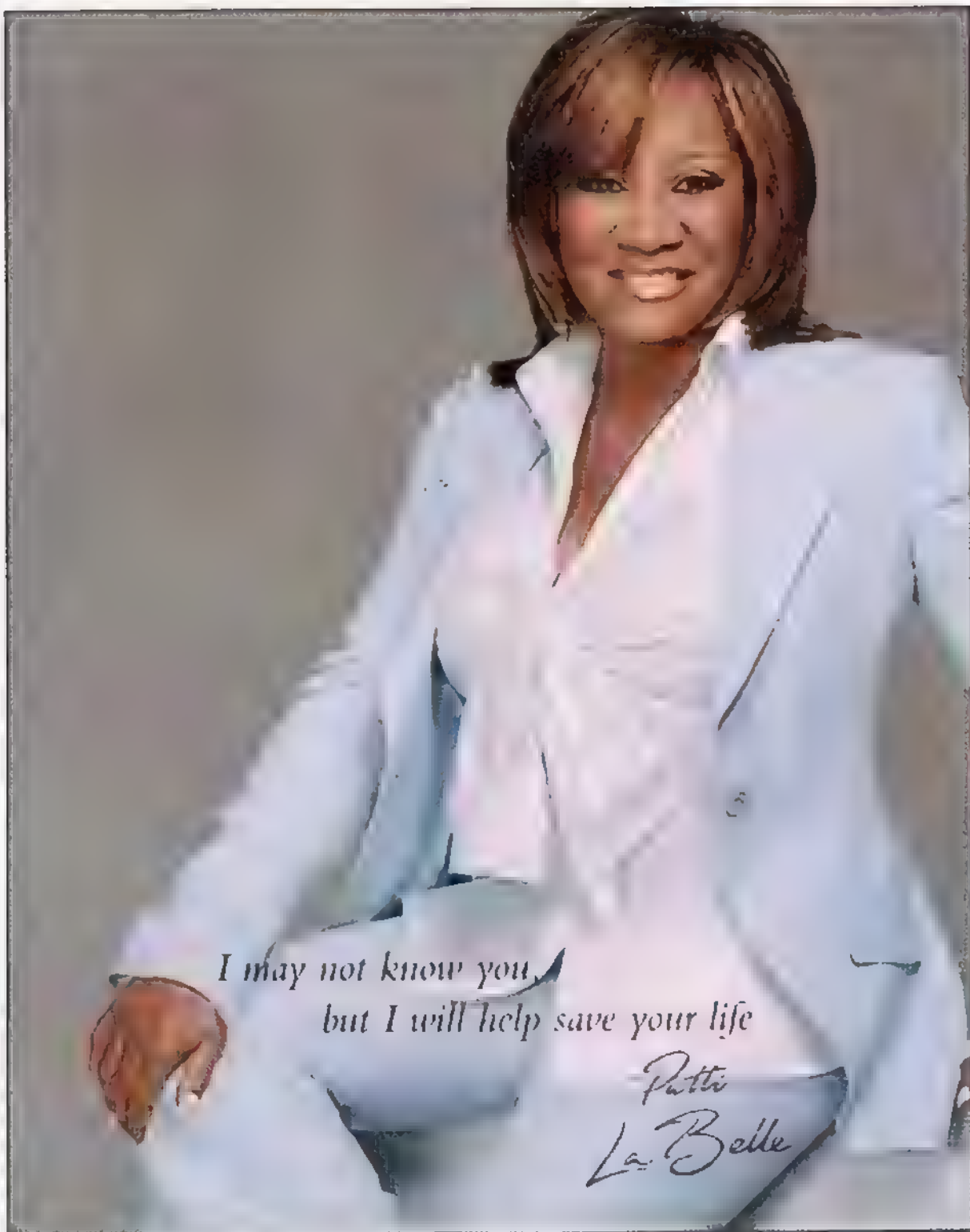
popular destinations served by the extension are the Bears and Eagles Riverfront Stadium, The Newark Museum and Broad Street area businesses. For more information, visit ntransit.com/njc.



Disabilities: All Tiers at Prudential Hall and the Victoria Theater are wheelchair accessible. Open captioning is provided at select performances. Sennheiser Infraport infra red audio receivers are available free-of-charge. NJPAC Guest Service staff

NJPAC welcomes children of all ages to its family events, but adult performances are not recommended for children 5-years-old and younger.

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